over Rs. 2 lakhs, including SSI units, are being charged interest @ 25% p.a. in working capital accounts and 24% p.a. in Bills purchased/discounted accounts except in the following cases :

(i) Advances accounts having credit rating 'AAA';

(ii) Export Finance;

(iii) Term Loans; and

(iv) Sick units under nursing programme.

As regards advances below Rs. 2 lakhs interest rates range between 10% to 18·5% p.a. based on the size of the loan.

(b) The Reserve Bank of India has prescribed a minimum interest rate of 18·5% p.a. in respect of short term loans over Rs. 2 lakhs, and banks are allowed to charge a higher rate of interest over and above such a floor rate as a matter of policy.

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Export of Basmati Rice to Gulf Countries

2353. SHRI GOVINDRAO NIKAM : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to export Basmati rice to Gulf countries;

(b) if so, the names of countries to which it is proposed to be exported;

(c) the amount of foreign exchnage expected to be earned as a result thereof; and

(d) the steps the Government propose to take to increase the production of basmati rice ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) to (c) : The export of basmati rice is freely allowed subject only to a Minimum Export Price (MEP) and pre-shipment inspection.

Basmati rice is exported to Gulf countries in substantial quantities Saudi Arabia. UAE, and Bahrain are major markets. Export target fixed for Gulf market for 1991-92 is over Rs. 300 crores.

(d) For increasing production of Basmati rice, 20 major Basmati rice producing districts have been indentified in Haryana (2) , Punjab (7), and Uttar Pradesh (11) and a production programme is being implemented in these states under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Integrated Programme in rice development (being implemented in 239 selected districts in major rice producing states), For propagating the adoption of improved Basmati rice production technology assistance is being provided to the farmers of the identified districts for use of inputs like seeds, micronutrients, pesticides, farm implements, plant protection equipment, etc. Besides, field demonstrations in Basmati rice production are being organised and training programmes for the farmers and farm labourers are conducted.

The seed of Basmati rice is being provided to the farmers of 20 selected districts on subsidy of Rs. 200/- per quintal. Assistance through this scheme is being provided mainly to the small & Marginal farmers. However, other category of farmers also get assistance to some exent under this programme.

55 Inland Waterways

Navigability of Hooghly River

2354. SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken by the Government to improve navigability of the Hooghly river for the benefit of the Calcutta and Haldia Ports; and

(b) the results achieved so far ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) A comprehensive scheme for the improvement of draught in the Hooghly Estuary was sanctioned in August, 1982 at an estimated cost of Rs. 42 crores. Under this scheme the works being undertaken are river training works, procuremen

of a navigational tug and navigational aids and instruments. Another scheme namely, recession of Jiggerkhali Flats was sanctioned in April, 1990 at an estimated cost of Rs. 43·29 crores. The scheme involves dredging of the order of about 7 million cubic metres.

(b) The Comprehensive scheme is in progress and is anticipated to be completed by June, 1992. The contract for the dredging of Jiggerkhali flat has been awarded and the work is still to be completed.

Length of National Highways

2355. SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state the total length of National Highways in the country as on December 31, 1990, State-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : A statement is attached.

STATEMENT

Sl. No.	Name of State/ Union Territory	Length of NH in Km. (Provisional)
(1)	(2)	(3)
1	Andhra Pradesh	2519
2	Arunachal Pradesh	330
3	Assam	2296
4	Bihar	2117
5	Chandigarh	24
6	Delhi	72
7	Goa	229
8	Gujarat	1631
9	Haryana	698
10	Himachal Pradesh	854
11	Jammu & Kashmir	648
12	Karnataka	1996
13	Kerala	940
14	Madhya Pradesh	2946
15	Maharashtra	2918
16	Manipur	431
17	Meghalaya	472
18	Mizoram	551
19	Nagaland	113
20	Orissa	1649
21	Punjab	892
22	Rajasthan	2931
23	Sikkim	62
24	Tamil Nadu	1896
25	Tripura	200
26	Uttar Pradesh	2613
27	West Bengal	1638
28	Pondicherry	23
	TOTAL	33689

60 SCs/STs/OBCs

Option to SC/ST Employees in Punjab National Bank for Deletion of their Belonging to the Category

2356. SHRI ROSHAN LAL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Punjab National Bank has given option to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes employees to get the fact of their belonging to SC/ST category deleted from their service records;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the number of SC/ST employees category-wise who exercised this option and their records have been amended, accordingly ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH) : (a) to (c) Punjab National Bank has reported that on receipt of a request from one of its employees belonging to Scheduled Caste category for deletion of his name from the Scheduled Castes, it had taken up the matter with the Government for advice. The Government, after examination of the issue, had advised the public sector banks, including Punjab National Bank. that such a request could be acceded to if the employees furnished a sworn affidavit to the effect that he is voluntarily quitting the benefits available to him as a Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe candidate and that he will not claim